

Message Text

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TAGS: ECON, UK
SUBJECT: IRANIAN STATEMENT ON DEFAULT

1. FINANCIAL TIMES NOVEMBER 23 CARRIES FOLLOWING STORY:

QUOTE THE DISPUTED INTEREST PAYMENT DUE ON THE 500 MILLION DOLLAR SYNCIDATED LOAN TO THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT OF IRAN, WHICH MAJOR WESTERN BANKS HAVE NOW DECLARED TO BE IN DEFAULT, WAS "FRUSTRATED" BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S FREEZE LAST WEEK OF OFFICIAL IRANIAN ASSETS, BANK MARKAZI IRAN, THE CENTRAL BANK, SAID YESTERDAY.

QUOTE IN A STATEMENT ISSUED IN LONDON, BANK MARKAZI STRESSED: 'THERE IS NO INTENTION ON THE PART OF THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT NOT TO MEET ITS INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL BANKING COMMUNITY.'

QUOTE THE INITIAL REACTION OF INTERNATIONAL BANKS LAST
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NIGHT WAS THAT THE IRANIAN STATEMENT FURTHER CONFUSED AN ALREADY HIGHLY UNCERTAIN LEGAL POSITION OVER IRANIAN DEBT, AND UNDERLINED THE LIKELIHOOD OF PROTRACTED LEGAL PROCEDURES TO SORT OUT THE POSITION OF IRANIAN DEPOSITS AND LOANS OUTSTANDING AROUND THE WORLD, PARTICULARLY WITH THE U.S. BANKS.

QUOTE NEVERTHELESS, THE BANK MARKAZI REFERENCE TO IRAN'S

INTENTION TO HONOUR ITS OBLIGATIONS IS BEING GREETED AS THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT REASSURANCE TO INTERNATIONAL BANKS FROM THE TEHRAN AUTHORITIES SINCE THE U.S./IRANIAN CONFRONTATION WORSENEED LAST WEEK.

QUOTE THE STATEMENT WAS ISSUED BY THE IRANIAN COMMERCIAL BANK, BANK MELLI, ON THE CENTRAL BANK'S BEHALF. IT REFERRED TO THE 500 MILLION DOLLAR IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT LOAN, WHICH IT NOTED WAS NOW CLAIMED TO BE IN DEFAULT.

QUOTE BANK MARKAZI EXPLAINED THAT INSTRUCTIONS WERE SENT ON BEHALF OF THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCY CONCERNED TO CHASE MANHATTAN BANK NEW YORK ON NOVEMBER 5, INSTRUCTING THE PAYMENT OF JUST OVER 4 MILLION DOLLARS IN NEW YORK CLEARING HOUSE FUNDS FOR ACCOUNT OF THEIR LONDON BRANCH. THIS PAYMENT REPRESENTED INTEREST DUE ON NOVEMBER 15 TO LOAN PARTICIPANTS. (CHASE MANHATTAN IS AGENT BANK FOR THE LOAN, AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DISTRIBUTING INTEREST PAYMENTS AMONG PARTICIPATING BANKS.)

QUOTE THE STATEMENT ADDED: 'BANK MARKAZI THEREFORE CONSIDERS THAT THE CHASE MANHATTAN BANK NEW YORK HAD 10 DAYS TO ARRANGE THAT THE PAYMENT TO THE PARTICIPATING BANKS WAS CORRECTLY ORGANIZED. THE FACT THAT PHYSICAL TRANSFER OF FUNDS WAS FRUSTRATED BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S REGULATIONS CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT, IN THE OPINION OF BANK

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MARKAZI IRAN BE CONSIDERED AN EVENT OF DEFAULT.'

QUOTE STRESSING THIS POINT, THE STATEMENT WENT ON: 'THE DELAY IN TRANSFER OF THE FUNDS CONCERNED WAS CAUSED NOT BY THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT BUT BY FORCE MAJEURE OCCASIONED BY THE AMERICAN REGULATIONS, AND IT IS CONFIDENTLY BELIEVED THAT A CORRECT AND AMICABLE SOLUTION TO THIS TECHNICAL PROBLEM CAN EASILY BE FOUND.'

QUOTE CHASE MANHATTAN SAID IT HAD NO IMMEDIATE COMMENT TO MAKE. END QUOTE.

BREWSTER

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